

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing unified messaging to a first user, comprising the steps of:
  - (1) receiving a message from a second user to the first user, wherein said message comprises a media component and a non-media component;
  - (2) storing on a mass storage device said media component of said message; and
  - (3) storing on an email server said non-media component of said message and a corresponding reference to said stored media component of said message.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
  - (4) receiving from the first user a request for said message;
  - (5) retrieving from said email server said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference; and
  - (6) providing to the first user said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
  - (7) receiving from the first user a request for said stored media component of said message, wherein said request is received via said corresponding reference;
  - (8) retrieving from said mass storage device said stored media component; and
  - (9) providing to the first user said stored media component.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein said message is any one of: a voice mail message, a fax message and an email message.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
- (4) receiving from the first user a request for said message;
  - (5) retrieving from said email server said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference;
  - (6) retrieving from said mass storage device said stored media component, wherein said retrieving is performed using said corresponding reference; and
  - (7) providing to the first user said stored media component of said message and said non-media component of said message.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein said message is any one of: a voice mail message, a fax message and an email message.
7. A system for providing unified messaging to a first user, comprising:
- a mass storage device for storing the media component of a message;
  - a storage device, coupled to an email server, that stores the non-media component of said message and a corresponding reference to the media component of said message;
  - a voice mail server that receives said message from a second user to the first user, wherein said message includes a media component and a non-media component; and
  - a message handler, coupled to said voice mail server, that sends to said mass storage device the media component of said message for storage and that sends to said storage device the non-media component of said message for storage.
8. The system of claim 7, wherein said message is any one of: a voice mail message, a fax message and an email message.

9. A computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having control logic stored therein for causing a computer to provide unified messaging to a first user, the computer control logic comprising:

first computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive a message from a second user to the first user, wherein said message comprises a media component and a non-media component;

second computer readable program code means for causing the computer to store on a mass storage device said media component of said message; and

third computer readable program code means for causing the computer to store on an email server said non-media component of said message and a corresponding reference to said stored media component of said message.

10. The computer program product of claim 9, the computer control logic further comprising:

fourth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive from the first user a request for said message;

fifth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to retrieve from said email server said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference; and

sixth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide to the first user said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference.

11. The computer program product of claim 10, the computer control logic further comprising:

seventh computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive from the first user a request for said stored media component of said message, wherein said request is received via said corresponding reference;

eighth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to retrieve from said mass storage device said stored media component; and

ninth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide to the first user said stored media component.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said message is any one of: a voice mail message, a fax message and an email message.

13. The computer program product of claim 9, the computer control logic further comprising:

fourth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive from the first user a request for said message;

fifth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to retrieve from said email server said non-media component of said message and said corresponding reference;

sixth computer readable program code means for causing the computer to retrieve from said mass storage device said stored media component, wherein said retrieving is performed using said corresponding reference; and

seventh computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide to the first user said stored media component of said message and said non-media component of said message.

14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein said message is any one of: a voice mail message, a fax message and an email message.

15. A method for providing unified messaging for messages, comprising the step of:

storing media components of the messages at a first location; and

storing references to the stored media components of the messages and remaining portions of the messages without the media components at a second location, whereby the stored media components can be delivered in real-time to a real-time device.

16. A unified messaging system, comprising:
  - a first storage device that stores media components of messages; and
  - a second storage device that stores references to the stored media components of the messages and remaining portions of the messages without the media components.
17. The unified messaging system of claim 16, wherein said first storage device comprises a mass storage device, and said second storage device comprises an email server.

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